

*Kingdom, Civitas and County: the evolution of territorial identity in the English landscape*. Stephen Rippon, 2018. Oxford, Oxford University Press. 438pp, copiously illustrated in B&W. ISBN 9780198759379 HB, £85

This monograph represents the second of a loose trilogy comprising *The Fields of Britannia* (Rippon, Smart and Pear 2015) and Rippon's forthcoming *Territoriality in the Early Medieval Landscape*. The current volume is an ambitious work. It rises to the challenge of incorporating the ever-growing corpus of artefactual data into a history of the territorial development of Eastern England (defined as the North Thames Basin, East Anglia and the South East Midlands) from the Late Iron Age to the Late Saxon period.

The main body of the book is taken up with eleven chapters that explore the various forms of evidence from the study region. Soil quality, placenames, pottery, coins, dress fittings, architectural and burial styles all feature and the author is at pains to emphasise his methodological and empirical rigour. The result is a palimpsest of distribution maps which, it is claimed, demonstrate the longevity of 'socio-economic spheres of community interaction' in the *longue durée* from the Iron Age to the early medieval period. These spheres of interaction somehow produce a 'territorial identity', which is a rather slippery, under-developed and under-theorised concept. As an example of this, one particular quotation from Sian Jones's (1996) *The Archaeology of Identity* is repeated on at least four occasions, but much of the recent and copious literature on identity by archaeologists, historians and others is missing. As a consequence, 'territorial identity' emerges as a sort of sub-stratum that survives even though political identities (kingdoms, *civitates* and the like) change. At one point (pg 350) 'folk territories' are introduced. This is an unfortunate use of terminology which conjures images of peasant *volk*, or Tolkien's 'Shire Folk': sturdy rustics immune to the vacillating fashions of their social and political betters. This seems to be what 'territorial identity' is about: 'kinship and a common sense of identity, as well as a differentness compared to their neighbours' (pg 333).

Methodologically the volume makes good use of quantified data and up-to-date distribution maps. The use of numbers of objects by size of excavation areas (Fig 2.13) is an innovation that could be applied more widely to distributional studies. The range of object types discussed is also impressive and it is good to see Roman ceramic data, largely overlooked by the Roman Rural Settlement Project, being integrated into a broader synthesis. One hopes that others will follow in Rippon's footsteps here as we badly need new interpretations and models to explain the distribution of pottery.

The standard of production is high but some of the greyscale maps are too small and cluttered. Hilund Nielsen (pg 260, 262) is presumably Høilund Nielsen and this reviewer, a West Country lad, was amused to see (Fig 6.1) *Duronovarian* (Dorset) mosaics in what must surely be the supposed territory of the *Corieltauvi* (E. Midlands).

*Kingdom, Civitas and County* is a thought-provoking book, which will undoubtedly be a stimulation to further research. It is rich in detail; understanding what that detail means is the future.